



## **Real Skills for Youth Grant Solicitation**

### **Pre-Proposal Conference**

Wednesday, December 18, 2019

#### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**1. Does each proposal have to include all three major elements of programming: career exploration, work-readiness training, and work-based learning?**

Your proposal must include work-readiness training as a component. Work-readiness training can be included in the proposal either as a stand-alone training or embedded through the program. Career exploration and work-based learning components are not required elements of a proposal.

**2. The work-based learning component includes an eighty (80) hour minimum participation requirement; is there a minimum requirement for participation hours for other programming?**

No, the length of programming outside of work-based learning is up to the partnership to decide.

**3. May the required eighty (80) hours of work-based learning include work-readiness training or is the 80-hour requirement separate from that?**

The 80-hour requirement can include work-readiness training.

**4. The solicitation (on page 10) talks about applicants being able to include up to 120 hours in their budgets regarding work-based learning. Is the 120-hour maximum per student or for the duration of the program? Does this mean that work-based learning programming cannot be longer than 120 hours?**

Applicants may include youth wages for up to 120 hours in their budgets, however applicants are encouraged to leverage funds to cover some of the wage costs. This limit is specifically for budgeting purposes; work-based learning activities in general can be longer than 120 hours.

**5. Summer programming is required to be at least five (5) weeks in length. Can applicants propose four weeks of programming in the summer? Alternatively, can summer programming be longer than five weeks?**

The five-week summer work-based learning requirement is to ensure a depth of experience for participants. If partnerships have a compelling reason to limit the summer experience to four weeks but can still ensure a deep and high-quality experience, they should indicate so in their proposal and articulate the rationale for the shorter programming period. There is no upper time limit for paid summer programming, and it could certainly extend into the academic year if appropriate – again, partnerships should make the case in their proposal.

**6. For current Real Skills for Youth grantees who have year-round funding, is it permissible to prepare students for future summer work during year-round programming now?**

If such activities are contemplated in a grantee's current scope of work under their RSFY grant, such activities would be permissible. If this is the case, proposals should articulate how participants are being prepared now for summer activities.

**7. Is there a mandatory adult to youth participant ratio?**

There is no mandatory adult to youth participant ratio; staffing must be reasonable to provide adequate supervision and mentoring to participants. Staffing plans should be well articulated in proposals.

**8. Can applicants propose different participant cohorts under the same proposal? For example, can applicants propose that twenty-year-olds and fourteen-year-olds would be engaged in different activities?**

As appropriate, activities should be differentiated for age, skills, and experience. For example, programs for younger youth aged 12-15 may want to focus on career exploration, work readiness and/or work-based learning supported in the classroom. Older youth aged 16-24 may be better served through work-based learning opportunities with direct employer engagement to gain real world experience. Applicants should explain the differences in programming in their proposal.

**9. The stated age range for paid summer work-based learning is 14-24. Can we serve a target age within that limit or do we need to include all ages between 14 and 24?**

These ages represent the lower and upper limits. Programming can be directed toward whatever ages within that limit for paid summer work-based learning (example, only 15 to 18-year-olds); applicants should articulate this in their proposal.

**10. For participants under 14 years old, should applicants focus on career exploration?**

Career exploration is a great activity for younger students. Applicants should note that the majority of Real Skills funds will be dedicated to paid summer work-based learning opportunities for youth ages 14-24, however career exploration for younger youth is certainly allowable in a proposal and it is a recommended type of programming for a youth participant under 14 years old.

**11. Our organization meets the criteria for an industry representative and a youth-serving representative. Can we apply as one organization meeting both roles?**

A lead applicant may apply as meeting both roles of industry representative and youth-serving organization if the proposal clearly demonstrates how the organization represents two distinct roles serving youth and industry.

**12. Are there requirements for the recruitment and enrollment process; for example, should we recruit participants from youth centers or use a specific enrollment form?**

There are no required enrollment forms, though partnerships should ensure that enrollment forms collect all required information to ensure eligibility and for reporting participant data to the GWB, and to include parent signatures for acknowledgement that data will be shared with funders. Applicants are not required to partner with youth centers for enrollment, though they are encouraged as partners given the large number of youth signing up for summer work-based learning opportunities at those locations.

**13. Is connection to student Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs) a required component of the proposal?**

The Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is a student-directed planning and monitoring tool that customizes learning opportunities throughout students' secondary school experience, broaden their perspectives, and supports attainment of goals. The ILP documents students' interests, needs, supports, course selections (including access to college level programming), transition placements and other learning experiences both in and out of school. Work-based learning or career exploration programming should align to a student's ILP and are encouraged where possible.

**14. Real Skills for Youth relies on partnerships. How can we connect with potential partners?**

A list of RSVPs of interested parties for the Pre-Proposal Conference is posted [here](#). Not everyone RSVP'd to

the meeting, so if your name and organization is not on the list, please email Julissa Polanco Disu for your name to be added at [julissa.polanco@dlt.ri.gov](mailto:julissa.polanco@dlt.ri.gov).

**15. Is there a limit to how many proposals one organization can join?**

There is no limit, however proposals should demonstrate how that organization contributes to each partnership, and how the organization will ensure that it has enough capacity to partner in each case.

**16. Page 11 of the grant solicitation mentions that employers should sign a worksite agreement outlining expectations. Can you provide a template of a worksite agreement?**

There is no required template, however the grant solicitation on page 11 outlines responsibilities of employers which should be included in this agreement. Current Real Skills grantees are a great resource for examples of this.

**17. Will youth be required to obtain work permits and fill out certain tax forms if paid by stipend?**

Youth ages 14 and 15 do need a [Special Limited Permit to Work](#) to be employed and receive wages. However, if youth aged 14-15 are participating in an educational program that provides them with a classroom-based experience (ex. industry project, service-learning project, school-based enterprise) and they are receiving a stipend from an intermediary organization (not an employer) then they would not be required to have work permits. Regarding tax paperwork, providers are responsible for ensuring that youth have the proper paperwork needed to receive payment. Youth centers have managed eligibility and payment processes in the past, and we encourage applicants to use them as a source of expertise.

**18. How does income from Real Skills affect family social assistance benefits? We hear of youth not participating because of concerns that their income will affect their family's benefits.**

The below information describes the treatment of income earned by youth for the RI Works cash assistance program and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Additional questions should be directed to the RI Department of Human Services.

For the [RI Works Program](#):

218-RICR-20-00-2.15.5 INCOME DISREGARDS

REV: 05/2019

For applicants and recipients, net adjusted income equals the total of any unearned income plus any amount remaining from earned income after deducting the earned income disregards and any allowable dependent care disregards. This amount must be less than the appropriate cash assistance standard in order for financial eligibility to exist.

Exclusion of Earned Income of a Dependent Child

Disregard all the monthly earned income of each dependent child from the assistance unit's income.

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For the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#):

218-RICR-20-00-1.5.3(14) Earnings of Children

REV: 05/2019

Disregard the earned income of children who are members of the household if they are elementary or high school students at least half-time and are not yet eighteen (18) years of age. Their income is also excluded during temporary interruptions in school attendance due to semester or vacation breaks, provided the child's enrollment will resume following the break. If the child's earnings or the amount of work performed cannot be differentiated from that of the other household members, the total earnings must be prorated

equally among the working members and the child's pro-rata share excluded. Individuals are considered children for this exclusion if they are under eighteen and under the parental control of another household member.

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**19. Can partnerships provide stipends to participants for career exploration activities?**

Yes.

**20. If choosing to pay summer work-based learning participants by stipend, is there additional guidance in terms of equivalent hourly payment or minimum payment over a length of time?**

It is up to the applicant to determine what makes the most sense for that program. Some additional guidance in terms of work-based learning and payment can be found in the [GWB Work-Based Learning Guidance](#), and applicants can also contact the GWB to discuss further.

**21. Is there flexibility regarding the minimum wage requirement? Can participants be paid higher than minimum wage?**

If participants are paid wages, they must be paid at least minimum wage – this does not prevent partnerships from paying higher than minimum wage. However, final decisions on budgets will be based on funding available.

**22. Is there a funding limit per proposal?**

There are no funding limits, however budgets will be examined as part of the evaluation process and final decisions will be based on available funding.

**23. Is there a limit to administrative/staff costs in the proposal budget?**

There is no limit; however, the expectation is that most funds would go toward direct provision of services to youth (including wages and stipends) and not toward capacity-building or administrative costs.

**24. Do Real Jobs or Real Pathways partnerships need to apply to this grant solicitation if they want to engage in youth work?**

Real Jobs and Real Pathways partnerships can propose youth work through the typical “PITCH” process. Proposed activities should align to this grant solicitation and to the partnership’s comprehensive plan. Real Jobs and Real Pathways partnerships should contact their grant advisor to discuss further if this is of interest.

**25. In the evaluation process, will employer connections with Real Jobs Rhode Island partnerships be scored higher than connections with non-Real Jobs industries or employers?**

There are no added “points” for connections to Real Jobs partnerships, though engagement with in-demand industries are highly encouraged. Proposals will be evaluated on their quality, which includes the presence of industry/employer representation to provide demand-driven programming.

**26. In the evaluation process, will preference be given to proposals that offer high school or college credit to participants?**

While there are no additional “points” dedicated to this, offering academic credit as part of youth participation in programming is encouraged when possible.

**27. After the program is complete, will the GWB provide a standardized evaluation for all partnerships to use with participants?**

Applicants should provide qualitative and quantitative outcomes for their programming, and provide a thorough plan for quality assessment throughout the program. Proposals must explain how they will collect and analyze that data to gauge progress toward those outcomes and what the plan is for gathering youth and employer feedback in real time. The GWB will provide a standardized survey both for youth participants and employers/teachers/mentors/supervisors to measure youth participant skill gains, in addition to program and narrative reports from grantees.

**28. Can the lead applicant or fiscal agent be an individual person? Can the entity responsible for payroll be an individual person?**

No, individuals are not eligible to apply for the Real Skills for Youth grant, and payroll should be supported by an organization, not an individual.

**29. Can a budget include staff costs incurred before student activities? For example, if student activities will happen during the academic year only, can the budget include staff costs during the summer to prepare?**

That is permissible, and applicants should justify this in their proposals.

**30. If we are a Real Skills for Youth grantee for 2019-20 and are re-applying for 2020-21, can we propose different partners from last year for this proposal?**

Yes, applicants can propose any partners that they feel are appropriate if the proposal meets the requirements for representation from education and industry. Returning applicants should describe how proposed partners and activities build off the previous work and lessons learned.

**31. Are there margin/spacing requirements for the proposal?**

The Proposal Narrative must use at least 12-point font, at least 1.5 spacing, and page numbers, and be no more than 18 pages long, not counting charts and calendars. Charts may use single spacing and a 10-point font. Citations for specific data points should be included within the narrative as footnotes; no works cited page is required. The prescribed cover sheet must be the first page of the proposal.

**32. How do we hand in our proposals? How many copies do you need?**

On January 31<sup>st</sup> starting at 11am, GWB staff will be seated in Room 73-1 of the Department of Labor and Training collecting proposals and providing receipts. If you wish to turn in your proposal earlier than January 31<sup>st</sup> at 11am, please ask the security guard at DLT to call Julissa Disu in the GWB. Proposals must be submitted no later than 2pm to be considered.

Six (6) copies of the proposal must be submitted in hard copy, plus one electronic copy on a USB flash drive or CD.

**33. Do we need to write a proposal that spans 3 years?**

No, applicants should write a proposal for programming held over the course of up to one year (May 2020-May 2021). There is a section in the proposal narrative where applicants can explain what the long-term vision is given the option to renew the contract for an additional two years. This determination will be at the sole discretion of the GWB.

**34. Can youth participants submit electronic timesheets?**

Yes, partnerships can collect timesheets in the manner that works best for them.

**35. How do we differentiate performance targets for summer versus year-round activities in the charts provided?**

There are sections on the charts that ask the applicant to identify the start and end dates of activities. This will identify the difference between programming being held in the summer versus programming that is year-round.

**36. Can a youth participant receive combination of either a stipend or wages and some sort of academic credit for career exploration?**

Yes.

**37. How will partnerships be awarded additional funds if their contracts are extended beyond the initial year?**

Funds will be initially awarded for up to one year. Should a partnership be extended to up to three years, the GWB will work with partnerships to award additional funds, likely through a rolling supplemental funding process.

**38. Can the required training for health, safety and rights on the job be held before programming is in session?**

Yes, applicants should outline the timing in their proposals. GWB will arrange for this training to be provided; applicants need not include details for this in their proposal, but grantees will be required to coordinate with the provider for this training.

**39. If we want to propose multiple activities, should we submit multiple proposals or include them all in one proposal?**

Applicants should submit one proposal, and proposals can include multiple activities.

**40. Do non-profit agencies need to have taxation letter of good standing?**

A Letter of Good Standing is still required for a non-profit – such entities should indicate such status on the application and complete the affidavit on page 6.

(<http://www.tax.ri.gov/Tax%20Website/TAX/Letters%20of%20Good%20Standing/index.php>)

Other entities should inquire with the Division of Taxation to see if a letter is required. If they are exempt, they should explain why a Letter was not deemed required and include the explanation in their proposal.

**41. Is a recent Letter of Good Standing acceptable?**

A letter of Good Standing dated within the last 12 months is enough.

**42. Does every partner need to be named in the proposal?**

We ask that applicants name all partners they can initially. The GWB recognizes that organizations may want to add partners later in the process. GWB will work with grantees on a case by case basis when this occurs.

**43. Can students receive one component of programming from one organization and another component from a different organization?**

Yes, this is allowable as long as the experience of the youth participant is cohesive and the quality of programming is not interrupted or compromised.

**44. Are school districts liable for students in work-based learning activities?**

In the GWB work-based learning guidance found here, please read the section 'Legal Questions around Youth Internships' where it explains liability for businesses and schools.

**45. Can the applicant enroll participants on a rolling basis? Are performance targets in the proposal specific to the individual or the spot?**

Applicants can enroll participants on a rolling basis so long as the quality of programming is not compromised given participants will have different start times.

**46. Can past grantees submit abbreviated proposals?**

No, all applicants are required to submit full proposals.